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# THE COMMUNIST

*In this Issue*

Labour in the Service of  
Empire

Can Socialism be Built in  
Britain ?

Lenin in Exile

Published at  
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# THE COMMUNIST

Published by A. Holland at 254 Grays Inn-road, London, W.C1

February 1927  
Vol. 1. No. 1

## BUILDING UP SOCIALISM

BY  
NIKOLAI BUKHARIN

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# THE COMMUNIST

## A Monthly Review

### THE OUTLOOK

*"It is more pleasant and more useful to live through the experience of a revolution than to write about it."*

LENIN, "State and Revolution."

THE farcical proceedings of the "enquiry" Conference of Executives on the General Strike are over. The General Council, as expected in the circumstances and composition of the Conference, has got away with a "victory." By a vote of two to one its conduct has been whitewashed. But are we to take it the subject is now closed with these proceedings? Not at all. The question is now before a higher court. In matters of this kind the rank and file is the final court. They have never had a chance to discuss the question. Apart from the publicity given, rightly, we believe, in the "Sunday Worker" to the T.U.C. report, and in the "Workers' Weekly" to the case for the miners, the General Council has deliberately sought to prevent the membership of the trade union movement from having anything to say about its conduct. The movement must now discuss the question freely, for the issues involve the future policy, tactics and organisation of the whole trade union and Labour movement. Moreover, since the documents are released and loyalty to the Executives is no longer at a premium, the discussion can assume a more concrete shape.

One important fact that emerges from the Conference is the tremendous deadweight of bureaucracy in the trade union movement. Here we have the greatest strike in modern times involving millions of workers, and the most serious challenge to the power of capitalism, yet it is treated as if it were a "tuppence-a-penny" industrial dispute. In the circumstances under which the Strike was called off, an honest leadership would have urged a conference to explain. Instead, eight months elapse, the facts are kept strictly secret, the membership of the unions given no explanations or opinions asked for, or consulted in any form. A packed court sits on the enquiry, and we are asked to accept the verdict as final! Seemingly, as a writer in "L'Humanité" puts it, "The trade union movement, that is **us**," say the leaders, "you, the masses, have



only one right. That is to pay dues." This deadweight of bureaucracy must be lifted.

It is now patent to all that the leaders never believed in the power of the General Strike, and were afraid of it. Some of them, frightened out of their wits with what they were confronted last May, are "telling the world" they will never be parties to it again. When men like Crampeau speak as he does, in effect, they are giving notice of their intention to play traitor the next time.

The workers must take such gentry at their word and clear them out *now*.

The strike is an indispensable weapon in the struggle against capitalism. It can never be given up. He who says no strike says no trade unions, and a free hand for capitalism. On the other hand the logic of the strike weapon, the more so in these days of trusts and combines, is the General Strike. In effect, when Crampeau, Thomas, Clynes, Henderson, etc., urge "peace in industry," knowing there can be no peace in industry under capitalism, they are sabotaging the workers' movement and leaving them open to long-term agreements that bind the hands of the workers while the capitalists rob them. Beware the "Peace in Industry" talk. The organisations of the workers must remain unfettered for the big struggles that lie ahead.

This conference in refusing to protest against E.P.A., or the anti-trade union legislative proposals of the Government; in refusing to raise its voice against the war-like activities of the Government directed against the Chinese workers, was a definite encouragement to the forces of capitalism to continue its reactionary offensive. It remains for the Communists and the militants of the Minority Movement inside the trade unions to redouble their efforts to break the shell of bureaucracy, and to push forward a fighting working class policy in every industry, so that a repetition of last May will not occur next time.

\* \* \* \* \*

The steady increase in the army of the unemployed, now made more extensive with the hundreds of thousands of miners thrown out of work in the rationalisation process taking place in the mining industry, raises sharply the problems of organisation and policy for the unemployed. Some features of this question are raised by Comrade Douglas in his article which appears in this issue of the "Communist." We print it in the hope of stimulating discussion on the relations of the unemployed to the man in work, and the trade unions.

The session of Parliament which opens in February is going to concern itself with two outstanding questions for the whole

working class movement, viz., the anti-trade union legislative proposals and the proposals for reforming the Poor Laws. All the proposals and the proposals for reforming the Poor Laws, all the boasted "democracy" of local government, and the basis of the case for "the inevitability of gradualism" in our political institutions were blown sky-high when the West Ham, Chester-le-Street and other Guardians were sacked, and a high-salaried dictatorship put in their place, with no other authority than that of the Minister for Health. This new attack upon the unemployed—for that is what Poor Law Reform means—is the clearest evidence of the exercise of dictatorship of the ruling capitalist clique.

\* \* \* \* \*

The manifesto issued by the National Unemployed Workers' Committee is right in declaring that "the only true working class position to take up on the question is to fight the whole scheme, and prevent the Bill being passed by Parliament." The manifesto issued by the E.C. of the Labour Party has adopted the Communist Party proposal put forward a year or two ago that full financial responsibility for the unemployed should be a national charge, though they omit our proposal of administration through the trade unions. Clearly, there is only one course for a Labour Party that intends to fight for the interests of the workers employed or unemployed. No parliamentary etiquette, procedure or palaver should stand in the way of an open fight against the present "dictatorship" in Parliament, and for the speedy dissolution of this Government.

But the unemployed workers should be under no illusions. Relief to those out of work, and the measure of it was only won after a hard struggle to force the hands of the Boards of Guardians. In this fight the N.U.W.C.M. did fine work. It had to fight then not only the capitalist Government but the Right Wing leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions. But for a long time there has been a drift and laxity in organisation until in too many cases the Guardians and Poor Law authorities have had things their own way. Of course, there are explanations for this, but the fact exists that there is great need for a revival of the fighting spirit of 1920.

The Government would hesitate to go as far as it proposes to go if it felt any pressure from outside. The General Council of the T.U.C. would not dare to refuse to call together the Joint Advisory Committee of the T.U.C. and the N.U.W.C.M. if it felt any pressure from below.

The proposals of the Blanesburgh Commission to wipe off certain grades of workers from the Insurance Act and to reduce benefits are, in conjunction with the Poor Law "Reforms," part of the general policy of capitalism to save itself at the expense of the working class. It is part of the general offensive of capitalism



against the working class, and the lesson is plain. There is no half-way house of refuge, there is no alternative to Communism and to the policy of the Communist Party.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is common knowledge that one of the weaknesses of the General Strike last May was the failure to have any common agreement or plan of action between the Co-operative Societies and the General Council of the trade unions. Individuals were left to make their own terms and local organisations had to go on their hands and knees for assistance. The question is now raised of an understanding between the Co-operative Union and the Trades Union Congress for the future.

For our part we believe it essential that there should be the closest relationship between these two organisations. The need for an agreement is as necessary for the Co-operatives as for the trade unions. Undoubtedly the local Co-operative societies were badly hit during the strike and the miners' lock-out. On the other hand exhaustion of means and absence of credits from the local societies forced large numbers of miners to abandon the struggle at the most critical period of the struggle.

Proposals for an understanding are timely. Let the directorate of the Co-operative movement be ever so capitalist-minded, the broad basis of the organisation is proletarian. Recent experience only demonstrates the urgent need for a change in leadership and policy, and in view of the greater and more widespread struggles of the working class that lie ahead, it is the duty of every militant worker to give more attention to the Co-operative movement, especially its leadership.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first Republican Government of the Chinese was set up 16 years ago under the leadership of the Kuomintang Party with Sun-Yat-Sen at its head. Sun-Yat-Sen was republican China's President with headquarters at Canton. The history of revolutionary China is the history of all the colonial and oppressed peoples. It has had to fight bitterly the opposition of the imperialist Powers, with Great Britain in the front line of the attack. Persecution, suppression, and execution of its loyal leaders has been the lot of the Kuomintang Party, while bribery and corruption of the war-lords has been rampant in confusing and dividing the Chinese masses for the glorification of the foreign imperialists.

When Sun-Yat-Sen died in March, 1925, the Kuomintang Party and the Canton Government were firmly established in control of the whole of Southern China. Sun Yat Sen, whose ideal was a Socialist republic, like his great contemporary Lenin, was held

in great esteem by the masses of workers and peasants. Since his death every new advance made by the revolutionary government of Canton has been enthusiastically acclaimed by the wide masses of the Chinese people. It is the only government that can exist in China. The war-lords of the North have only been able to maintain themselves against it because they had the material support of the imperialist Powers. The first aim of the Cantonese government is to end the rule of the "foreign and domestic imperialists," and to establish the unquestioned sovereignty of an independent China. Only when this is done will the workers and peasants be free to develop their own social order. Therefore the first duty of every trade unionist, Labour Socialist and Communist worker is to render the utmost aid to their Chinese brothers and sisters in their struggle for national and social freedom.

The course of the Baldwin Government is set. The despatch of an expeditionary force to Shanghai, the mobilisation of further ships and men mean war. It is the means of force to sustain the policy of the economic boycott used by the capitalists and financiers to provoke an economic breakdown and chaos. Soon we shall hear of outrages, massacres, or "incidents" of one kind or another as the excuse for open murder.

Mr. MacDonald, as leader of His Majesty's Opposition, we are told is informed of the Government's plans. The Labour Party Executive has issued a statement tacitly supporting the Baldwin Government in its Chinese policy while at the same time advising the workers not to form "Hands off China" committees. Thus, once more we see the Labour Party acting as the lackeys of the war-mongers and imperialist plunderers.

The workers must not tolerate this new crime of their leaders. The leaders of the Labour Party and the General Council of the T.U.C. must be compelled to take a clear anti-imperialist stand against intervention in China or get out. The war on the Chinese revolution must be stopped at all costs.

\* \* \* \* \*

The success attending the Lenin memorial meetings is a good send-off for our Party recruiting campaign. These meetings, the interest and the enthusiasm shown towards the life's work of Lenin is the best answer to the pedantic queries in a certain section of the Labour movement who are worrying at present about the need for "a theory of British Socialism." Socialism, as every Socialist Sunday School scholar knows, has no national frontiers. What passes for British Socialism is sheer international opportunism with another name.

There was a time when followers of the renegade Blatchford,



including the I.L.P. with the intellectual backing of MacDonald and Snowden, made merry over the practical-mindedness of British Socialism as compared to the Continental Socialism of Marx. This was in the heydays of the Second International, when Keir Hardie could sponsor resolutions at the International Congress for a general strike against war.

Since then the workers of this country have had their experience. They have seen "British Socialism" in the service of capitalism during and since the war.

They have had their eyes opened to the real nature of the class struggle, and the lessons drawn and taught by Lenin have helped them much. That is why the Communist Party is forging ahead and gaining the support of the working masses. In the building up of a mass Communist Party the pedants and scholars who can only see in Socialism and the class struggle a great debate and argument will get their answer: Socialism is international, its basis is active class struggle.



## Can Socialism be Built in Britain ?

A REPLY TO OUR LABOUR IMPERIALISTS.

By THOS. BELL

[In the discussion at the Seventh Enlarged Executive Meeting of the Communist International on the Opposition with the C.P.S.U., the subject of Building Socialism in a Single Country was brought prominently to the front.

Our Party delegates took an active part in this discussion, and raised the question as it affected Great Britain. The following is an excerpt from the speech delivered by comrade Bell. We print it as an important and original contribution to a subject of great interest for the whole working class movement in this country.—Editor.]

**T**HE fundamental question of the whole discussion around the opposition is the question of whether or not we can build Socialism in a single country. Comrade Stalin has put this question very concretely. He has said it is not a question of building Socialism in Bulgaria (we might say in Chili or Peru), it is a question of whether it is possible or not to build Socialism in the Soviet Union, within the confines of the U.S.S.R.

To this question every Party must give a decisive answer with regard to its own particular national boundaries. It is a question that every Party must answer as concretely as our Russian Party has done. The answer will determine the general political line that will be taken by our brother Parties.

Comrade Lenin, it is said, had raised this question in 1915, but, in Great Britain, the question of whether or not we can build Socialism in our country is as old as our social reformist movement. Long ago this question was raised by the reformists. It was raised by those elements that went to make up the Independent Labour Party, the Social-Democrats, the trade union leaders, who all oppose Marxism as being a "catastrophic" theory. Our reformists have always been opposed to Marxism on the grounds that it was "cataclysmic," and they argue that, even given the most favourable majority in the parliamentary democracy, the fact that Great Britain is largely dependent on the colonies and the foreign territories for its food supplies—means that the revolution would be starved out, even if it were politically possible.



Here then we can agree with comrade Stalin in his declaration as to the ideological unity of the Opposition. This Opposition in the U.S.S.R. has been made up of diverse fractions who have nothing in common with each other. In Great Britain, every time the Opposition raised its head in the U.S.S.R., the I.L.P., the Social-Democrats, the trade union leaders, and renegade Communists always took courage and began to renew their attacks upon our Party. But it is put quite correctly, I think, that if Socialism cannot be built up in the U.S.S.R., then obviously our brother Party is not right in insisting in continuing the dictatorship.

In this question we, too, are involved, for if it is impossible to build up Socialism in Great Britain, then to continue the work which we are carrying on, in trying to win the masses over to Communism, is an actual practice of deception upon the masses. If it is impossible to build up Socialism in Great Britain then there is no need for a Communist Party in Great Britain. If it is impossible to build up Socialism in Great Britain, then all that is left for us to do, i.e., those elements who are anxious to work for a transformation of society in Great Britain, is to follow the Labour Party.

### The Starvation Theory

In Great Britain, it might interest many of our comrades to know that the very basis of our Labour imperialism is the belief in the "starvation" theory, i.e., the theory that the revolution in Great Britain would lead to the isolation of the country from foreign territories and the cutting off of the food supplies, thereby starving our people. Comrade Lenin said in regard to Russia, "We have all that we need for the building up of Socialism in the U.S.S.R." We think that we in England can say that we have all that is needed for the building up of Socialism in Great Britain. It is true that Great Britain is a highly industrialised country with a backward agricultural movement. This circumstance has obsessed the Social Reformists and in this they have tried to find support for their theory that it is necessary to retain the colonies of the British Empire intact in order to secure food supplies for the people of Great Britain. But, however true (and I am not admitting it for a moment) this starvation theory was in 1913, we cannot by any stretch of imagination, say there is any justification for such an argument to-day. We declare there is an economic basis for our proletarian movement in England.

We have, for example, always regarded the colonies as a possible base for our food supplies. In this connection, Ireland may be mentioned as one of the most important territories for the sustenance and support of Great Britain. This argument about the colonies has only one point; it has an imperialist motive

for the bourgeoisie, by means of which they have successfully cajoled the Labour leaders.

But we have to note this fact, when we are considering the question of a proletarian revolution in England, that the existence of the U.S.S.R. is something we cannot really rule out. Exclude the colonies (which, of course, we cannot do in any proper perspective of the proletarian revolution in England)—but excluding the colonies, for argument's sake, we have to take as a positive contribution to the proletarian revolution in England the existence of the U.S.S.R. as an economic base.

### Capitalist Intervention

Comrade Stalin, in speaking of the building up of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., has said that we are constantly menaced by imperialist intervention but that there have been obstacles in the way of this intervention. He spoke of four material obstacles:

First, the contradictions between the imperialist countries themselves;

Second, the ferment in the colonies;

Third, the revolutionary tempo of the workers in other countries;

Fourth, the achievements of the U.S.S.R. itself, particularly the progress that has been made in building up the Red Army.

These factors comrade Stalin refers to will also prevail in the event of a revolutionary struggle in Great Britain, especially, I would say, the first two—the existence of contradictions within the imperialist groups and the ferment in the colonies, the latter being an absolute corollary to any proletarian revolution that takes place in Great Britain.

With regard to the third factor—the revolutionary tempo of the workers of other countries: here it is useful to remember the strong financial ties between London, that is, between Great Britain and most of the countries in Central Europe. Every one knows that most of the Baltic States are more or less indebted to Great Britain and the Allied imperialists. Portugal, Austria and a number of other countries in Central Europe are bound by these financial ties. In the event of a proletarian revolution in Great Britain, obviously the cutting of these financial ties would lead to crises. This would provoke and stimulate the revolutionary tempo of the workers which would be a positive gain for the revolutionary movement in Great Britain. Thus, on this ground of intervention obstacles, we can say that these particular factors are definitely in our favour in Great Britain.

### Can We Run the Industries?

Another important question is the question—can we manage



to organise and run the industries of Great Britain? To this question we emphatically say, Yes. In the U.S.S.R. there were many difficulties that had to be overcome after the October days on account of the backwardness in the industrialisation of the country. Many of those difficulties will not, and do not prevail in Great Britain.

In Great Britain we have a technically organised industry, one of the oldest industrial economies in the world of capitalism. We have a skilled industrial working class, which is highly trained, highly developed. We have also a well-trained trade union movement, a trade union leadership with experience as functionaries, who not only deal with questions of wages, negotiations with employers, but whose very business of negotiating with employers involves an understanding and study of prices and raw materials, in a word, all those factors which are essential for the proper organisation of economy. It is very important for the building of Socialism that we have in the working class in Great Britain, from the petty foreman and leading directors of groups of workers in the factories through to the under-managers and managers, a whole army of technicians who do not by any means belong to the intellectual class, but an army of technicians who are essentially proletarian in their origin and general make-up.

These are some of the stages which in Great Britain we will be able to jump over, stages which were absolutely necessary for the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. to overcome before they could go on to the high road of building up Socialism.

### Agriculture and the Colonies

Another point is that in Great Britain it is openly acknowledged that agriculture has not been developed to the extent of its utmost capacity, but has been subordinated to industrial development. Scientists, long ago, have declared that it is possible by a more intensive agriculture in Great Britain to produce food that would sustain double the existing population. When we take that into consideration, when we take into consideration that we can not obliterate the U.S.S.R.—the fact that we have one-sixth of the globe as our allies—we can see what a tremendous potentiality we have here for our economic base.

Then we have to consider our relation to the colonies. Obviously, the conquering of the political power by the working class of Britain and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship means the separation of the colonies from Great Britain. The means the separation of the colonies from Great Britain means the release of large peasant territories who are capable of forming alliances with the proletariat of Great Britain, for example, Ireland, as

have already mentioned, which is a huge agricultural territory capable of enormous development.

We can scarcely imagine a proletarian revolution in Great Britain without a complete separation of India from Great Britain and the setting up of an independent India. Here again is a huge territory with easy access to the U.S.S.R., and thus access to Great Britain that will form a powerful economic base for the sustaining of revolutionary forces in Great Britain. We have here then, in addition to intensive home cultivation and the positive assistance of the U.S.S.R., the conditional bases in Ireland and India, and possibly some of our other colonies. These are the main allies of the proletarian revolution in England which we must take into consideration and which we must always have in mind when we speak about building up Socialism in Great Britain. The industrial working class, I repeat, can have, with the agricultural workers, an alliance with the Soviet Union and these colonies thus be assured of the maintenance of their revolution and dictatorship.

### The Co-operatives

Already comrade Lenin has drawn our attention to the importance of the co-operative movement in building up the revolution in the U.S.S.R. In Great Britain we have a highly organised co-operative movement—a co-operative movement that not only produces raw material, essential food supplies, but has huge factories for the working up of those raw materials into finished products. In the distribution of the finished products it has enormous distributing centres and, though it is true that our co-operative movement is purely capitalist in its leading ideology and direction, nevertheless, our co-operative movement has an essentially proletarian basis and, under proletarian control, will be a useful and a very powerful support for our proletarian revolution.

Then there is the question: will the victory of Socialism in Great Britain be definitive? To this question we can say that the struggle in England will be a quick one; it will be decisive and it certainly will be severe. In this connection we cannot rule out the existence of the navy of the British bourgeoisie. One essential for the security of the proletarian revolution in Great Britain, and for the building up of Socialism is the existence of a Red Navy. As to the possibilities of this, our bourgeoisie take great pride in the navy. They think that the navy is patriotic to the bone, and is proof against any revolutionary movement. It is true that we have still a tremendous amount of propaganda to put in before we can seriously speak of the navy becoming Red, but it would be a mistake to under-estimate the possibilities of sections of the navy going over to the side of the proletariat in the revolution.



We have had some evidence, on a minor scale it is true, during the period of the Great War. We have had evidence in big Labour disputes of a radical temper amongst the men who man the navy and, while we must say that there is yet considerable propaganda to be done before we can bring over the navy to the side of the proletariat, we must also definitely underline the fact that without a Red navy, the revolution in Great Britain would be impossible.

Given the proletarian power, as I have already stated, it means that the colonies are released for the support of Socialism. The British bourgeoisie will retreat to one or other of these colonies, as a new basis to carry on their counter-revolutionary activities. But one thing we feel is absolutely sure and positive, and that is, that the gem of the British Empire, India, will be lost for British imperialism, and this will be a most powerful support for our proletarian revolution.

### Our Weakest Link

Then the question is raised as to how the revolution will come about in Great Britain. Here we have to say that the Second International has been very active before the war and since the war in perverting Marx and Marxism. The outstanding example of this has been the theory of the Second International that the revolution would come only through the highest developed capitalist country, that without a highly developed industrial capitalism the revolution was impossible. This is a theoretical basis for the opposition of the Second International to Bolshevism and to the Communist International in general.

But our experience has proven that it may be the weakest link in the whole chain of the bourgeois imperialism that may be the via media for revolution. From the standpoint of Great Britain we can say that the weakest link in the chain of the British Empire is the fermentation that is now going on in the colonies, and the demand of the colonies for complete separation and independence. Here I would like to say that we do not at all share the views of our comrade Buck from Canada, where he speaks of us discussing whether or not Canada was going with America, and raises the question of which section of the Canadian capitalist class the British workers should ally themselves with.

The question of whether Canada will go with America or not will be determined very largely by the principles we put before the separation movement in Canada, and by the positive activities of our Communist movement, which must organise the alliance of workers and farmers, the only real pledge of Canadian independence. If we are passive; if we adopt the fatalistic attitude, then Canada may go anywhere, but if we are active and place

separation, the independence of Canada as a Workers' and Farmers' Republic, in front of our programme, then we can secure Canada as an ally of the proletarian revolution in England against both the British and American capitalists.

### Party Leadership

Comrade Stalin was right in saying to all our Parties that just as with our brother Party in the U.S.S.R. we cannot stand idly by and watch the process of building up Socialism in an automatic and mechanical manner. It is vital in the U.S.S.R. for the proletariat and the revolution, for our Party not to stand idly by and allow any opposition to force itself to the surface, and as it is vital for the U.S.S.R., so we too, in our respective Parties, cannot stand idly by. We too, are compelled to fight, to go forward for the building up of Socialism in our particular countries, if we genuinely and seriously believe that it is possible to do so. To say that we cannot build Socialism in England is to abandon Socialism completely, and the only thing left for us to do is to go over to the camp of the Labour reformists. That is the only thing left for us and those who have any radicalism in their being at all.

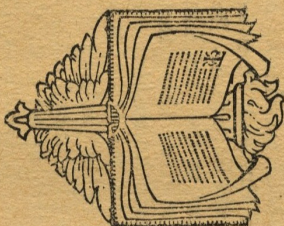
Once capitalism has been overthrown and the proletariat has gained political power in England, then we can say that we are going to, and we will build Socialism. But to lead the working class to Socialism, whether in the U.S.S.R. or in Great Britain, or in any other country, the one thing that is essential is a centralised Party and a single leadership. Without this it is impossible to secure Socialism for the U.S.S.R. or for any other country. The firm faith of the working class is essential to support a centralised Party and a united leadership. The determination on our part to preserve at all costs the dictatorship of the working class, to suppress all groupings, all opposition elements that open the way for a new class attack on the proletariat is absolutely indispensable for the building up of Socialism in any country.

Therefore, the two questions which I have put at the beginning of my remarks—I want to say that first of all disloyalty to the Central Executive Committee, disloyalty to the Party in the U.S.S.R., in Great Britain or in any of the sections of the Communist International, is intolerable and that fractionalism in any single Party or within the Communist International is a crime against the revolution and a crime against the world proletariat. Therefore, in the name of the Communist Party of Great Britain, we emphatically condemn the opposition which has tried to throw back the revolutionary movement in the U.S.S.R., and we approve



of the disciplinary measures that have been taken to suppress that opposition.

To the second question—can Socialism be built in Great Britain? We say, Yes! emphatically Yes! That with the aid of the proletarian dictatorship in Great Britain, in alliance with the U.S.S.R. on the Continent, and the huge peasant reserves in the colonies, we say emphatically Yes, it is possible to build Socialism—and we will build Socialism in Great Britain.



## Lenin in Exile

By ERIC VERNEY

LENIN when in London often went to Highgate Cemetery and stood by Marx's grave. After the Third Congress of the S.D. Party in London in 1905, he took the whole Congress to visit Marx's grave. One or two comrades went on in front, and when they got inside the cemetery, they could not find the tombstone. Two stonemasons working there, guessed they were Russians and therefore took it for granted whose grave they were seeking. They asked: "You're looking for Karl Marx's grave, aren't you?" By this time, Lenin had caught up the other delegates. He was quite surprised that they had managed to find the grave, as he himself, though often there before, always found it difficult to single out Marx's unpretentious tombstone. But when Lenin saw the two laughing stonemasons shyly retreating, he realised how the comrades had found the grave. "You see, comrades," remarked Lenin, "how the British worker knows whom we are intimately seeking, knows whom we love. Yet Marx, who is their genius, who grew up on the great British industry, technique, science and civilisation . . . , yet Marx is of little interest to the British worker. He thinks that Marx is all right for unfortunate 'Russian' and Eastern peoples, suppressed by the capitalist yoke. As if they themselves are little oppressed by 'their own' capitalism."

Lenin usually worked at the British Museum in the morning, then had dinner in some small restaurant, after which he would attend editorial meetings and finally resume his literary work. His only amusement was to visit concerts. In the evenings he would go a walk and return home to write or read. According to Lenin's comrade in emigration, Meshtcheriakov, the only books that Lenin brought from Russia that did not deal with political or scientific subjects, were Nekrasov's poems and Goethe's "Faust." Lenin's rooms, though very simple and modest, were always clean, well ventilated and orderly.

When Vera Zassulitch and Plekhanov arrived, they all lived together in a boarding house on a communal basis. Trotsky arrived after his escape from Siberia, and was recommended to Lenin as a "Young Eagle." His first meeting with Lenin took place when the latter was still in bed. They used to talk together a great deal and go long walks. Lenin proposed co-opting



Trotsky on the editorial board of "Iskra." Plekhanov was against this. At this time enormous work was accomplished in establishing contacts with Russia and sending through "Iskra" and various pamphlets. There were illegal transportation points everywhere—from Verdö in Finland, to Batum in Georgia.

### Geneva

In April, 1903, the "Iskra" was transferred to Geneva. Lenin accompanied it. The split at the Second Congress of the Party in August was a great personal blow to Lenin. He was able to love people profoundly, and among the people for whom he had great affection and admiration at that time were Plekhanov, Vera Zassulich and Axelrod. But this devotion to various individuals did not in the least influence his political position. If it was necessary, he would not only break politically, but also personally even with the greatest of his friends. This was why Lenin felt the split so greatly.

In Geneva, Lenin lived the same spartan life. Sometimes there was practically nothing to eat in the house, the last penny being spent on newspapers. Many of the then Russian Bolshevik emigrants, who are now leading Soviet Statesmen, earned their living by carrying luggage for tourists, or cleaning shop windows. In the little room in which Lenin lived, the furniture was so scanty that he supplemented it with empty packing cases. Some comrades jokingly called Lenin's apartment the "smuggler's den" for this reason.

These were stormy days. Lenin and the Bolsheviks were concentrating on preparations for the Third Party Congress to be held in London. The Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were at daggers drawn. The latter said they would refuse to recognise the London Congress, as it was "illegal." Meanwhile, Lenin toured the various Swiss towns and read lectures to the emigrants. For this Plekhanov ironically dubbed him "the tourist."

At this time, there were two restaurants which acted as the centres of Russian emigrant life in Geneva. One was Lepeshinsky's where the Bolsheviks met, while there was a separate "Menshevik cafe." Lepeshinsky's was situated next to the Bolshevik printing shop, in the house where most of the Bolshevik fraction lived. Here groups of Russian emigrants could be seen at almost any time of the day, eating, reading, arguing or playing chess. At this restaurant members of the Bolshevik group who happened to be penniless, could get Madame Lepeshinsky's excellent Russian "borscht" (vegetable soup) on credit. Lenin's dome-shaped head might sometimes be observed bent over the chess-board. However, he was no longer the devotee that he had been when in exile. There was too much work to be done now. Further, he did not like sitting in tobacco smoke. If not in his

library or at home working, he would generally be out walking or climbing mountains.

The Mensheviks having collared the whole apparatus of "Iskra," Lenin and the Bolsheviks in 1904 brought out their own paper "Vpered" ("Forward"). But the technical difficulties were immense. They had only a small printing press, not much bigger than the illegal presses they used in Russia. "Vpered" was printed on thin English "cigarette" paper, the most convenient for illegal purposes. Lenin used colossal energy in securing this paper and finding new type. The type they had was very old, and Lenin was overjoyed when they were able to buy up some new type relatively cheaply.

On one occasion, just before the Third Congress, Bontch-Bruévich and the printer were taking the pages of set type up to the works in a cart. It had to be taken up this way, in sacks, as all operations in connection with "Vpered" had to be strictly conspirative, even the Swiss end. Owing to the jolting of the cart, one of the pages got loose and the type began to drop out into the roadway. Before they noticed it, about half a page had dropped out. As they had no spare type, Bontch-Bruévich and the compositor had to go back along the road and tried to pick up the letters one by one. Lenin was furious when he learnt of this. Fortunately, they were able to secure some reserve type and get the paper out in time. The difficulties were thus enormous. The Mensheviks even tried to agitate the composers, so as to get them to refuse to set up the "Vpered." They said the Congress was "illegal" and therefore the paper also. But Lenin, who was at the printing shop nearly every day, easily persuaded the workers to remain loyal. After the Third Congress, the name of the paper was changed to "Proletaryt."

### "1905."

At the time of the 1905 Revolution, there was great excitement in Geneva. The emigrants gathered in Lepeshinsky's cafe eagerly discussing the latest news. When the priest Gapon came from St. Petersburg, the Socialist Revolutionaries claimed him as "theirs" and advertised him. But at that time, even the "Times" was prepared to pay large sums for his articles, as he was the centre of public attention. Meanwhile, Lenin was concentrating his whole thought on the revolutionary events in Russia. And it was just when the movement was beginning to develop that the "revolutionary" Father Gapon arrived in Geneva to enlist assistance. When a Socialist-Revolutionary "lady" came round and said that Gapon would like to see him, Lenin agreed willingly. It was arranged that the meeting should take place in a "neutral" cafe.

Hours before the time fixed for meeting Gapon, Lenin was



pacing up and down in his room, which was in complete darkness. Lenin did not take up the same cold superior attitude towards Gapon as Plekhanov did. He knew that the Petersburg masses believed in the priest and he, therefore, was interested in him as a reflection of the revolutionary mood of the Petersburg workers. Lenin snatched at every opportunity of finding out what the masses were thinking, feeling and desiring. Therefore he could not pass by Gapon, who was so close to the masses. Lenin had long talks with Gapon. He told him to read and to learn, and tried to make him understand Marxism. But, as was proved afterwards, Gapon was never a revolutionary.

In the autumn of 1905, Lenin could hold back no longer. He left Geneva and returned to Russia to direct the movement. Before returning to Russia, however, Lenin himself directed the work of winding up the printing press. He gave detailed instructions as to where the paper and type should be hidden. "It might come useful again," he said.

Despite the great danger, he lived close to St. Petersburg near the Finnish frontier and for some time actually lived in the Tsarist capital, which might have cost him his life. He even attended meetings and conferences, and was in touch with the leaders of the Moscow rising. When the movement was suppressed, he continued organising the movement from his hiding place in Finland. He not only helped to direct the rising that broke out in Kronstadt in July, 1906, but directed the work of the Bolshevik fraction in the Finnish Duma.

Lenin went abroad again for the unitary congress, where the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks once more came together at the Fifth Party Congress in London in May, 1907. When he returned to Russia again after the Stuttgart International Conference, it was clear that it would be impossible for him to work, and the C.C. insisted that he should go abroad again to evade imprisonment.

At the end of 1907, he was back again in Geneva. In the summer of 1908, he went to London to work in the British Museum on his book "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism." According to Meshtcheriakov, Lenin read twenty Russian and over eighty French, German and English philosophical and scientific works before he completed this book.

Lenin's prophecy about the printing press coming in useful proved to be true. In Geneva he personally reorganised the Party press. Although absent for over two years, he knew exactly where to find the English "cigarette" paper, which was intact. At this time the Swiss police were very active in watching the Russian emigrants, no doubt by arrangement with the Tsarist government. It was at this time that Zinoviev came to Geneva and first met Lenin. He was astonished to find how simple, friendly and unpretentious was this great leader. Lenin was a remarkable contrast with Plekhanov, who had a very important

dignified and superior air, and little time for young newcomers from Russia.

### In Paris

In the winter of 1908 things became so difficult in Switzerland that it was decided to move the entire Bolshevik press to Paris. The first difficulty on arriving in Paris was that of lodgings. Rooms were not easy to find, especially for Russian emigrants who were looked upon as undesirable elements by the respectable Paris petty bourgeoisie.

Soon Lenin managed to secure lodgings. These consisted of one small room with an alcove and a little kitchen. Lenin and Krupskaya used to eat and drink tea in this kitchen. It was very dark and the gas had to be alight all day long. The furniture consisted of two plain deal tables, a few stools, an antediluvian armchair which they had brought with them from Geneva, an old dilapidated sofa and two simple iron bedsteads.

By this time, they had managed to find a printing press with the aid of Kamenev. The task of organising the press and transportation to Russia required tremendous exertion. They had to find type and satisfactory printers. According to the French law, the actual publisher had to be a Frenchman. They found a French editor at 100 francs a month, in the person of Mayeras, a Jaurest Socialist. He did not know a word of Russian, but came regularly every month for his 100 francs. At the same time Lenin continued his research and literary work. His working day was about 15 hours. He used to come home so fatigued, that he would often throw himself straight down on the bed, sometimes not even undressing. These poverty-stricken days and the colossal work that Lenin undertook, undoubtedly undermined his health and were no small factor in hastening his untimely and relatively early death.

Although not participating in the "social" life of the cafes, Lenin loved to merge amongst the Paris workers. He always wanted to know how they lived and what they thought. He probably knew more about the life of the workers in the various countries he lived in, than any other of the Russian political emigrés. Lenin was particularly fond of the working class atmosphere of the little cafes in the suburbs. He also visited the suburban theatres where he would sit in the gallery amongst the workers.

He liked to listen to Montégues, who was the son of a Communist and a singer of revolutionary chansons. This singer was very popular among the Paris workers. One of Lenin's favourite songs was "Salut a vous, soldats du 17." This was about the soldiers of the 17th Regiment who had refused to fire on strikers. Montégues' repertoire also included a satirical song about Socialist deputies elected by workers and peasants who were not class conscious. These deputies were represented in the song



as drawing salaries and doing nothing for the workers. " . . . Selling the people's liberty, for 15,000 francs a year. . . " or words to that effect. Lenin liked this song very much, and used to sing it. He often looked in the papers for announcements of Montégues' performances. He once invited him to a Russian evening, and they talked long into the night.

Lenin often went to election meetings. It used to amuse him to hear how the orators toned down their language, and instead of presenting ideas that appealed to the workers, uttered phrases acceptable by the petty bourgeoisie, in order to get more votes. When he came away from such meetings, he used to hum the song about "the Socialist deputies and 15,000 francs a year."

### Lectures at Montmartre

Lenin was very popular among the Russian and French workers who knew him in Paris. He used to read lectures to them in Montmartre restaurants. Russian workers used to come to these cafes after work, discuss news from Russia or read "L'Humanité and other Socialist papers. A piece of paper with the legend: "Lenin lectures here on political economy" would be stuck up on a nail outside, next to the bill of fare. At these lectures Lenin spoke in popular, simple language. His arguments were so clear and convincing, that he absolutely rooted the attention of the audience. He had a magnetic influence on the workers and infected them with his vigour and enthusiasm.

Lenin had long advocated the formation of special workers' training circles in Russia, and now that many of the "intelligentsia" had deserted the Bolsheviks at the critical period, he realised the necessity of arming a few advanced workers with a sound Marxist training. He, therefore, insisted on the formation of a Party school abroad. Meanwhile, Maxim Gorky, Lunacharsky and Bogdanov commenced such a school on the Italian island of Capri. Workers gathered here from all parts of Russia. When Lenin visited Capri in the summer of 1909, he was not satisfied with what these comrades were teaching. He had an intense fight with Bogdanov and the others, whom he accused of semi-mysticism, "god-seeking" and god-constructing." He thought their conceptions at that time were not genuinely Marxist but semi-religious. The result was that a section of the workers at the Capri School broke away, and followed Lenin, who returned to Paris to form a proper Party school.

This school was under the immediate direction of the Central Committee. Lenin read lectures on the agrarian movement and the trade union question, Zinoviev lectured on the history of the Russian Revolution, Kamenev on organisation questions and other comrades on other questions. In 1911 Lenin organised a summer school at Longjumeau, a country place south of Paris. Here he read 30 lectures on political economy, ten on the agrarian ques-

tion, and five on the theory and practice of Socialism. When the school finished, the students returned to Russia.

After Lenin returned to Paris from Capri, the printing press was moved to new premises at 110, Avenue d'Orleans, where the despatch was more convenient. Here there was a courtyard with trees in it. The editorial staff often used to set on benches beneath these trees and talk, and Lenin would join in the conversation. Chicherin, with both pockets bulging with papers, was a familiar figure under these trees. The French neighbours tried to get the Russians evicted as they made such a noise, and monopolised the seats.

In 1911, Lenin moved to the suburbs. By this time the connections with Russia had been developed to the full. Krupskaya used to handle the correspondence. She would sit up late into the night deciphering letter after letter. She did all the technical work for the paper, and also collected material for Lenin's literary work. Another occupation of hers was to sit up all night sewing waistcoats filled with Bolshevik literature, to be sent to comrades in Russia. Her mother, who was living with them, sometimes had to compel her to leave off as she would go whole nights without sleep. During this period Lenin used to work anything from 15 to 18 hours a day.

### Galicja

In 1912, when the legal paper "Pravda" was established, Lenin moved to Cracow. From here, in Austria, on the borders of Russian Poland, he would be able to direct the paper and in general conduct work in Russia much more conveniently than from Paris.

In Cracow, he and Krupskaya continued to live with the same simplicity. They had two rooms in the same house, where Zinoviev and his wife were living. There was a small kitchen where they all used to eat together. According to Lilina (Zinoviev's wife), dinner invariably consisted of mince-meat cutlets and soup. Lenin used to get up at nine in the morning and every day wrote articles for the "Pravda," "Zvyezda" and the Bolshevik review "Prosvetshenie" (Education). At twelve o'clock the post came and he examined the correspondence together with the others, and then had dinner. After dinner he would retire to his room and work until 8 or 9 in the evening. He used to read through carefully every single contribution for "Pravda" and was so eager to get the material off to Russia, that he would often walk to the station himself to post it.

In the summer they moved to Poronin, a quiet little country place near Cracow, at the foot of the Carpathians. Here Lenin frequently went mountaineering. He often used to mobilise the Russian comrades in the district and with rucksack on back spend a day climbing the mountains. He loved to watch the Galician



mountain lakes glistening in the sun. Once he went right over to the Hungarian side of the Carpathians and back, covering a distance of 60 versts in one day. Often he would rest in the mountain chalet and play chess. So great was Lenin's enthusiasm for mountain climbing that Zinoviev and Kamenev often found they had too much work to do!

When the war broke out in August, 1914, the Austrians had spy fever. Russians were being arrested as spies every day in Galicia. Feelings were so high that many Russian Poles were shot. At this period Lenin often used to take some books and go right out into the country and work somewhere in the open air in a wood, or by a lake miles away from Poronin. One one such occasion he came to a place called Novy Targ. Having a pile of new books with him, including some Russian statistical books, he began marking them. It so happened that the Austrian troops were digging trenches nearby. Lenin was immediately arrested as a Russian spy. He was put in gaol, but thanks to the intervention of the Austrian Socialists, was released after being imprisoned eleven days.

### In Switzerland Again

In September, 1914, Lenin settled in Berne, Switzerland. While in Berne in 1915 and 1916, he worked night and day opposing the war, and ruthlessly fought not only Plekhanov and the Russian Social-Patriots, but the entire Second International. It was during this period that the famous Zimmerwald and Kienthal Conferences took place, precursors of the Third International.

At the end of 1916, Lenin moved to Zurich. It was here he finished his famous book "Imperialism, the Last Stage of Capitalism." He got lodgings with some Swiss workers in an old gloomy house. The lodgers in this house were really cosmopolitan. Besides the "landlord," who was a Swiss carpenter, there was a cobbler, a woman who sold bread, and was the wife of a German deserter, and finally, an Austrian actress. Lenin and Krupskaya occupied the fourth and smallest room. The gas stove in the kitchen was used by all the lodgers to cook their food. Once the landlady said that the "soldiers should turn their arms against their own Government." After this Lenin would not hear of getting a better room, which had been their plan. He preferred living uncomfortably with revolutionary workers than comfortably with petty bourgeois chauvinists.

When the news of the February (1917) Revolution reached Zurich, Lenin and Krupskaya immediately bought up every paper they could lay their hands on and went down to read them by the side of the lake. Their first thoughts were to get back to Russia. "If only we had an aeroplane," Lenin said. For nights he did not sleep, trying to devise a scheme, for getting back. One scheme was for him and Zinoviev to walk through Germany

and get to Sweden. They did not know Swedish, so they would be dumb. Krupskaya said it would not come off. She said Lenin might dream he was arguing with Cadets and call out "You are swine" in his sleep. Then people would know he was not a dumb Swede.

Nevertheless, Lenin wrote to Canelzky in Sweden to try and get passports for two dumb Swedish workers. Nothing came of this, and after consulting with Fritz Platten, secretary of the Swiss Socialist Party, and a partisan of the Zimmerwald Left, it was decided that attempts should be made to get the German authorities to permit the Russian emigrants to return through Germany.

The emigrants appealed to the Russian Provisional Government to apply to the Allies for a free passage back to Russia. Through the connivance of Kerensky and the Allies nothing came of this. In any case they might have been arrested. In fact, Trotsky, Melnichansky and other Russian revolutionaries returning from America, actually were detained by the British. Therefore, there was no other possible choice but the journey through Germany. When it was clear that the Swiss comrades would help them, Lenin took the whole onus of organising this enterprise. The first conference took place with Platten and Willi Munzenburg in a Zurich cafe. Lenin took great pains to see that everything was arranged quite straightforwardly, so that there should be no hint of any deal with the German Government. He invited representatives of several Socialist and workers' parties who drew up a declaration approving of the proposed action, and justifying it in face of the international working class. Thus Lenin's conscience was quite clear.

In any case he had absolutely no relations with the German authorities. The negotiations were conducted by the Swiss Socialist, Grimm, with the German Ambassador in Switzerland. In general this move of Lenin's was an act of tremendous courage. Not only would he and his companions have to face a storm of abuse on the part of the Second Internationalists and the Allied Governments, but there was no knowing whether or not they might be arrested by the German authorities. If the latter let them through at all, it was only because they thought it might be advantageous to them. But it is well known how much the Germans regretted this step afterwards. Luderdorff confessed this was the greatest mistake of his life.

The Mensheviks and other Russian emigrant groups all agreed with the scheme, but it was only Lenin who had the courage to take the initiative in the organisation of the journey. When Lenin received a letter from Berne saying that everything was arranged, he insisted on leaving with the first train, although there were only two hours left in which to liquidate their affairs, return books to the library, settle up with the landlady, etc.



Krupskaya proposed that she should follow by the next train, but Lenin insisted that they should leave at once together.

### In the Sealed Railway Carriage

The thirty-two emigrants who were returning in the first party assembled at the People's House in Berne on April 9th, 1917. Besides Lenin, the party included Krupskaya, Zinoviev, Sokolnikov, Safarov, Inessa Armand and Tshkalaya. They had not got enough money to buy provisions for the journey, so the Swiss Socialists organised a collection, and got the local co-operative to advance provisions on credit. Lenin was thus far from being subsidised by the German government. The conditions of the agreement between Platten and the German authorities stipulated that the Russians should travel in a sealed wagon and not hold conversation with any persons on German territory. The Russians were granted extra-territoriality, their names not being asked and passports not examined. The Germans would not allow Radek to go as he was an Austrian subject. Lenin insisted that he should go, however, as a stowaway, and, as such he went.

A huge crowd of emigrants gathered on the station to see them off. Some Mensheviks and S.R.'s tried to organise a hostile demonstration. Yet 500 Mensheviks and other emigrants returned a little later with Martov in another train, although they had been frightened to take part in organising the enterprise. It is very significant that Kerensky and the Allies did not brand these Mensheviks as German agents, but only Lenin and the Bolsheviks. This was because they knew Lenin was returning to organise the Revolution. One eye-witness relates that a certain Russian doctor who was regarded as a provocateur by all emigrant groups, also tried to come on the train. Lenin got him by the scruff of the neck and forcefully marched him off the platform.

As they passed through Germany, the whole country appeared dead from the train windows. They hardly saw any men, and all the people they did see looked starving. The German authorities tried to give the Russians a good impression by feeding them on cutlets and peas. According to the agreement with the authorities the only person allowed out of the carriage was Fritz Platten, who was a Swiss subject, and in charge of the party.

Near Berlin a representative of the German Trade Union Federations came to bring "greetings." Lenin categorically refused to receive him. "I will have nothing to do with betrayers of the working class" he said. The poor fellow had to travel in the next carriage with the German officers who were supervising the party.

At one station where the train stopped, Fritz Platten went to have beer in the buffet, and the officers were busy keeping company with the trade union representative. He had travelled hun-

dreds of miles without having been able to get in to see Lenin. Radek, whose hiding place was under the luggage, took the opportunity of doing some propaganda amongst some German soldiers who had broken the police cordon and come to the carriage door. When the Russians objected that he was breaking the agreement by talking to Germans, and that he might compromise them, he retorted that as he was travelling "illegally," the agreement did not cover him.

The details of this trip through Germany are described by Radek in his reminiscences. Whereas all the papers stated that the Germans had given Lenin a "luxurious" wagon, Radek said it was dirty and swarming with bugs. Lenin worked during the whole journey. He read, and wrote in a big exercise book. But he also occupied himself with organisational matters. For example, he could not stand anyone smoking in his compartment. The result was that smokers had to use a certain other place, generally used for specific purposes.

The party finished the trip to Sweden by a sea journey during which Lenin, Radek and Zinoviev were the only ones not seasick. On their arrival, a huge supper was organised, but Lenin ate nothing. His whole attention was absorbed bombarding Gantzelky with questions about Russia. During the train journey from Malmo to Stockholm, he continued a barrage of questions. He eagerly discussed plans for the future, emphasised the need for the proletarian dictatorship, and warned of the Kerensky danger. He went on until 4 a.m. and had to be persuaded to go to bed almost by force.

*(Another article on Lenin by Comrade Verney will appear in next month's COMMUNIST.)*



## Stockholm Congress of International Co-operative Alliance

By MARJORIE CRAIG

**T**HE International Co-operative Alliance, which was founded in 1895 and quietly disappeared during the war as an international organ (though its constituents did their best for their own capitalist governments) has held two congresses since the war, and a third is due in August, 1927, at Stockholm. Naturally it is not possible in a short article to deal with all the problems of policy and organisation which will be touched on at Stockholm. But two things are of particular importance; namely, the position of Russia in the Alliance and the much discussed question of "neutrality."

### The Place of Russia in the I.C.A.

At the Basle Congress of 1921 Centrosoyuz was recognised as the representative of co-operation in Soviet Russia, although this step was taken against the wishes of the majority of the old Central Committee, which had been in office since the 1913 Glasgow Congress. The smaller Executive Committee, however, and the General Secretary, Mr. H. J. May, were in favour of the admission of the Soviet co-operatives, possibly because at that time the Alliance was in a very bad financial position. "As you all understand," said Mr. H. J. May, when he announced that Italy had qualified for an additional three members of the Central Committee, "the financial position of the Alliance is such that at the present time, we cannot refuse money."

As indicated by Mr. May, membership of the Central Committee is in proportion to the amount of money subscribed. The co-operative bodies of each state are entitled to one seat on the Central Committee in respect of their membership of the Alliance, and to an additional member for each £100 subscribed. The Central Committee is elected at the end of each triennial Congress, and itself elects a Central Committee of eight members, exclusive of officials. At present the maximum number of representatives on the Central Committee from any one state is fixed at seven. But the question of what a "state" is has remained unfixed. Before 1921 the Executive Committee was composed mainly of British nominees, but since the war an effort has been made to draw in men from Germany, France, the Scandinavian countries,

etc. But the British co-operative movement, which in 1923, for instance, provided more than half the total funds of the Alliance, still has three seats on the Executive, exclusive of the General Secretary. At the Ghent Congress of 1924, the Executive Committee, which had previously been composed of seven members, plus officials, was enlarged by one, in order to allow of the appointment of a Russian representative. "This was no more than just, seeing that the U.S.S.R. in 1923 had contributed £605, whereas no other country, except Britain (which contributed £1522) gave more than £226. Only two other countries in fact (France and Finland) gave as much as £200 each. The U.S.S.R. contributions were made up of £250 from Russia proper, £305 from the Ukraine and £50 from Georgia. In addition Russia, the Ukraine, Georgia, and later Armenia and Azerbaijan, sent representatives to the Central Committee. And as in 1924, 1925 and 1926 their subscriptions increased in amount, so quite constitutionally they became entitled to additional representatives. This happened quite naturally, in view of the great and increasing importance of co-operation in the Soviet Federation, where there are now 17 million co-operators.

### Squeezing out the Soviet Co-ops.

While no doubt welcoming the Russian subscriptions, which helped considerably towards putting the Alliance on its feet again (in 1921 there was a large debt to be cleared off) the British, German and French co-operators began to be alarmed when their own voting predominance on the Central Committee was threatened. They set about trying to reduce Soviet representation, and have now succeeded in disfranchising the great majority of co-operators in the various countries making up the Soviet Union. The question was raised at the Paris Executive Committee and Central Committee meetings in October, 1925, and postponed; it was again discussed at the Antwerp Executive Committee meeting in May, 1926; and finally in October, 1926, at Hamburg, the Central Committee, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, passed by 19 votes to 15, with five abstentions, a resolution that the U.S.S.R. for purposes of representation on the Central Committee, be considered as one country.

This step is a direct attack on Soviet co-operative organisations by the right wing representatives of Britain, France, Poland and Germany. The Central Committee for instance issues no pronouncement that the British Empire is to be counted as one unit; there is very little doubt that the co-operatives of Canada and Palestine, which have recently joined the Alliance, will be allowed separate representation on the new Central Committee which will be elected at the Stockholm Congress; should they care to put forward any nominee. The rule providing for a maximum of seven representatives was adequate to allow of the fair representation of the 4½ millions of British co-operators which have hitherto been



the most influential body in the Alliance, but it is grotesque that the 17 million co-operators in the U.S.S.R. should be limited to seven representatives. There are more co-operators in Georgia alone, for instance, than there are in Finland, which sends its three or four representatives, and more co-operators in the Ukraine than there are in Denmark. Yet Georgia and the Ukraine have to share seven representatives with Centrosoyus (which itself has 14 million members).

### Political Neutrality

One of the rules of the Alliance provides for political "neutrality," and round this rule there has lately been much academic discussion. The International Co-operative Alliance is not really neutral in politics. For instance a large part of the Basle Congress was taken up in praising the League of Nations, (although the German delegates found some difficulty in this). The I.C.A. not only asked for representation in the League and was disappointed when this was refused, but also asked to be represented at the Genoa Conference in 1922 and is most anxious to take an official part in the World Economic Conference which the International Labour Office is organising next May. Moreover from 1922 to 1924 the I.C.A. had a joint sub-committee with the I.F.T.U., and this was only ended by the Ghent Congress because the Russian delegates proposed that the Alliance should also enter into relations with the R.I.L.U. Honest right wing theoreticians such as M. Gide, find it difficult to go on pretending that the Alliance is neutral. At the Paris I.C.A. meetings in October, 1925, M. Gide created a great sensation by declaring that "neutrality" was after all only the decision of the majority and could be altered at any time. This undoubtedly expresses the true state of affairs and the reduction of Russian representation on the Central Committee is from that point of view merely an attempt to manoeuvre a "majority" to which the views of the present right wing leaders will be acceptable.

What such men as M. Albert Thomas and Herr Lorenz and Mr. Anders Oerne and Mr. H. J. May want to do is to keep the International Co-operative Alliance under their own control and, under the cloak of "neutrality," run it along the same lines as the I.F.T.U. and the Labour and Socialist International are being run. Linked up with the capitalist governments of Europe through such bodies as the International Labour Office, they are pursuing a policy of class collaboration and doing their best to help to keep the workers orderly and subdued. Their point of view was shown quite plainly by their reaction to the Russian proposal that the International Co-operative Alliance should organise a campaign to help the British miners. This proposal was turned down with the tacit approval of the British representatives, who ought to come in for severe criticism on this point at Stockholm.

## Studying the General Strike\*

A REVIEW BY J. R. CAMPBELL

THIS latest publication by the Labour Research Department from the pen of R. Page Arnot, is the best and most complete book on the General Strike that has yet appeared, containing, as it does, over 150 documents which throw considerable light on the greatest historic event in modern Labour history of this country. Due to the large number of documents which it carries, the book is somewhat compressed. It is not always wise to let the facts speak for themselves, because facts require often to be interpreted. And one feels, at times on reading this book, that there could have been more explanation and interpretation of the events themselves.

The first chapter deals with the economic and political changes that preceded the strike, but is very sketchy. Since, however, this aspect of the question has been sufficiently emphasised in, for example, the two books reviewed in these columns last month, and as the reader is likely to be more familiar with this than with the other aspects of the strike, there is no great loss to the book as a whole through the compression of this chapter.

The second chapter on "The Parties to the Dispute," deals firstly with the British Constitution, exposing the reality of class dictatorship hiding behind Parliamentary forms. And, says the author, "Just as the King, the Sacramental Man of the Middle Ages, lost all his personal power and became the mere facade of the structure of Government, so the whole of Parliament has become a facade behind which go on the operations of finance capital and the real Government of the country."

The role of the Privy Council is then outlined, particularly in relation to E.P.A.

"If the Government of the day considers that there is a state of emergency, a meeting of the Privy Council is summoned, consisting of two or three people, and the King, by a proclamation declares that a state of emergency exists. Immediately thereafter it becomes lawful for His Majesty in Council 'by Order' to make regulations for securing the essentials of life to the community.' Again, powers and duties can be given by Order in Council to the Government Departments to make regulations, to create new classes of offences, and to prescribe the penalties therefor. The traditional 'rights of the subject' are taken away. In a sense it becomes a declaration of 'All power to the police!' The proclamation has to be renewed each month and the Orders in Council and regulations

\* The General Strike: Its Origin and History," by R. Page Arnot. Labour Research Dept., 25, (Paper.) Obtainable at Communist Bookshop.



are periodically brought under review by Parliament. But this is a mere form. In effect, the country is subjected to a regime corresponding to a state of siege."

The Judiciary and the magistrates are next described, and their class role specified. It has always seemed peculiar to us that in the controversies with the Right Wing around the question of democracy, reference is seldom made to the class nature of the Judiciary. For when one realises clearly that in a country where the overwhelming majority of the population are workers, the overwhelming majority of those who administer the Law are members of the propertied minority, the sham of democracy is at once exposed. The fact of class dictatorship could not be more clearly illustrated.

The Trades Dispute Act (1906) and the E.P.A. are given in the Appendix to this chapter and are worthy of study not only in relation to the General Strike, but also in relation to the anti-trade union legislation now pending.

Red Friday is then described in detail and the following conclusion is come to:

"It will be seen that at the actual moment of the crisis, and for the week or two immediately following, there had neither been hesitation nor doubt on the part of the representatives of Labour. There had been clear insight, a clear call to action, and a clear response.

"In the course of the months that followed, there gradually grew up an atmosphere which obscured the facts and had an enervating effect on the general will of the General Council. This is related in the chapters that follow."

The weakness of this chapter is that while it tells us that this occurred, it does not tell us why it occurred. Surely an explanation is needed here.

The preparations of the capitalists for the General Strike are then outlined, while most readers are already familiar with the type of the personnel and the methods of the O.M.S. which are dealt with in this chapter.

The circular of the Ministry of Health issued on November 20th, 1925, instructing the local authorities to set up emergency machinery will be new to most people, and ought to be thoroughly studied by every intelligent worker. The meaning of this circular is dealt with as follows:

"It will be seen that this circular, taken in conjunction with the provisions Ministry of Health circular of 1922 (and before that the plans and schemes set afoot in 1919, as revealed by Mr. Lloyd George in his Mansion House speech after the railway strike of September-October, 1919), was really concerned to build up an extra-constitutional body in each locality, something which, however much it might be consent with recent Acts of Parliament, was designed to supersede or subordinate the whole traditional structure of local government in Great Britain. The local governing bodies either generally or in particular places, may have a different political complexion from that of the National Government. They might even, in places, have a Labour majority. The object of

these elaborate preparations was clearly to provide a machinery which the Government could regard as politically reliable. The mayor of an English Borough, the Provost of a Scottish Borough, is not, never has been, an official of the national Government. The new array of officials to be set up would take their orders from Whitehall."

The lack of preparedness on the Labour side is then dealt with, particularly Scarborough with its Left Wing resolutions and its strengthening of the Right Wing on the General Council, as is also the trust of the Labour leaders in the Coal Commission being able to find a solution for the difficulties.

### Origin of the Alliance

The miners' plans for the fight, including the development of the Industrial Alliance are examined. Comrade Arnot traces the origin of the idea of the Industrial Alliance to a resolution passed at the A.E.U. National Committee on May 27th, 1924, in which the Executive was instructed to approach the Miners' Federation, the N.U.R., and the Transport Workers with the object of forming an offensive Alliance against the employers. We think it is correct, however, that the same proposal was mooted towards the end of 1923, and at the beginning of 1924, in the Press of the Minority Movement, particularly in the "Worker," and that before the question was taken up by the miners in 1925, after it had been practically dropped by the A.E.U., there was a strong Communist Party and Minority Movement campaign with the object of popularising an Alliance of the workers in those industries.

It was, we believe, the influence of that campaign among the workers, and the feeling of the miners themselves that they must seek allies for the impending struggles, which was instrumental in bringing about the formation of the Alliance, and the resolution of the A.E.U.

The sabotaging of the Alliance by the Right Wing, led by the N.U.R. is then dealt with. Not only do we learn who were the leaders refusing to make preparations for the coming struggle, but they were even sabotaging an Alliance which was in the process of formation before the struggle loomed up before the workers.

The Royal Commission is next taken up and the suggestion is made that even from the point of view of capitalism itself, the Royal Commission presented a biased report calculated to put the difficulties of the industry in a worse light than they really were. It is suggested by the author that if long-term credits had been allowed to Russia to enable that country to purchase the necessary machinery and steel goods, an improvement in the steel industry leading to an improvement in the coal industry would have resulted. This may be so, but surely it was too much to expect a Coal Commission which was intent on turning down the most moderate measures of "State Socialism" in Britain making



any recommendation likely to have as its result the building up of Socialism in Russia at an increased pace.

Dealing with the negotiations between the General Council and the miners and the Government, it is quite clear from the documents on hand that long before the lock-out the General Council was endeavouring to bring pressure to bear on the miners to force them to whittle down their demands. In connection with the attitude of the Government during these negotiations, comrade Arnot recalls the circular which was sent out by the Central Office of the Conservative Party to the Press on April 26th, advocating an increase in hours in the coal industry. From this it was already apparent, even before the General Strike, that the Government was moving to meet the owners' point of view on the question of hours.

The story of the actual strike is told mainly by documents and will enable the reader to get a clear picture of the development of events, and since the average worker knows little about the development of the General Strike, owing to the stoppage of the newspapers and the relative isolation of the workers in their various districts, this section of the book will give an excellent picture of the situation as a whole.

### The Middle Class

One thing that strikes us quite clearly in reading this section is the wavering of the middle classes all through this period. So far from the General Strike ranging those elements of the "community" solidly behind the Government, as the Labour leaders had often previously predicted, the magnificent demonstration of working class solidarity impressed many of those elements, and the obvious weakness of the case of the Government and the mine-owners helped to create a considerable amount of sympathy for the workers.

This wavering expressed itself in the appeal of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the speeches of Mr. Lloyd George, and one cannot read the speech of Mr. Baldwin which was broadcasted at that time without realising that he recognises the existence of this middle class sympathy for the strikers, and is definitely combating it in his speech. It is quite clear that whatever the Labour leaders may say, the Government did not find all the elements whom they had expected to side with them actually doing so when the strike occurred. It goes without saying, if the Labour leaders had been a little more advanced, advantage could have been taken of this fact for the benefit of the strike.

The famous Samuel Memorandum is also contained in this book and in connection with this we would venture to make a suggestion for the next edition; that is that the earlier memorandum submitted by Sir Herbert Samuel to the General Council

before it reached its present form should also be printed. Those memoranda are to be found in the report of the General Council to the Conference of Executives which was to have been held last June. The printing of this earlier document would reveal what the leaders have fairly skilfully concealed, namely, that Sir Herbert Samuel was not merely in favour of lower wages, but also for variations in district percentages, and a form of negotiations which amounted in effect to District Agreements.

### A Base for Study

Worker students now have before them sufficient material to enable them to begin a serious study of the General Strike. We have comrade Murphy's book which gives the economic background to the developments preceding the strike, describes the strike and draws the lessons of that event. We have the book of comrade Burns which describes the role played by the Trades Councils in the struggle and the local experiences. Now we have the documented history of comrade Arnot.

There is still, however, something to be done. We want, if possible, to collate the experiences of the active men as to the difficulties they experienced locally during the strike; to get to know to what extent the local leadership was under the same illusions as the T.U.C., and also working to prevent the development of the strike. The experiences of the trade unions and co-operatives in the struggle and the responsibilities of closer co-ordination in the next struggle still require to be dealt with, but we have now a solid basis to commence those studies in the books mentioned, and it is hoped that every Party member will take the opportunity of getting and studying them.





# Problems of Unemployed Organisation

By FRED DOUGLAS

**E**VERY Communist analysis of the situation in Britain lays stress on the factor of unemployment. Its unabated persistence for a period of over six years gives it the character of being the clearest symptom of British capitalism's decay. Likewise its recent expansion and accentuation prove it to be an accurate barometer registering each new economic crisis.

The conclusions of the capitalists are in entire accord. Thus Lord Weir, speaking in the "Upper" House on December 14th last, stated very pointedly that: "The extent of unemployment is the most significant index to the national well-being." "In pre-war days," added the noble lord, "taking the twenty-five years before 1914, our highest recorded unemployment was in 1908, when the percentage was 7.8. Over the whole period the average percentage was 4.3. For the last five years the average has been 12.6 per cent. The lowest was in 1924, 10 per cent., and to-day it is as high as 13.4 per cent., even excluding the unemployed miners." So much for the national well-being!

From the practical, revolutionary standpoint, however, it is not sufficient to regard the unemployed as merely a passive element reflecting capitalist decline. The task must be seriously faced of constructing anti-capitalist forces out of the extending ranks. This, in one word, spells unemployed organisation. A review of the question of unemployed organisation at this stage should not be considered inappropriate.

## Does the N.U.C.W.M. Meet the Need?

As is well known, the pioneering work of bringing the unemployed under the influence of organisation has been carried out by the National Unemployed Workers' Committee Movement. Up to the present no serious alternative to the N.U.C.W.M. has been brought forward, not even by its most rabid opponents. But it would be idle to expect perfection in an organisation still in the experimental stage. Difficulties are, in fact, arising in connection with the efforts of the N.U.W.C.M. to organise the unemployed and these require the most careful consideration.

The most obvious deficiency is the comparative isolation of the Movement from the trade unions and the Labour Party. It

must be confessed also that, after years of spade work, the percentage of members enrolled and retained is relatively small when the dimensions of the unemployed army are taken into account. Further there is the practical confining of the struggle to one for relief, the conversion of the body of workless into an object for the exercise of the politicians' charity and patronage, the divorcement from the industrial battlefield—these are tendencies leading to the eventual demoralisation of the workers concerned. At the present moment the N.U.W.C.M. seems powerless to arrest these tendencies. A certain concentration of effort is called for to swing the Movement on to a different level.

## Recruiting the Unemployed Trade Unionist

To take the first question of the recruitment of numerical strength, it is necessary here to appreciate fully the difficulties. In the coalfields, for instance, there should be ample opportunities for gaining new members. Fertilised by the eight hour day arrangement, the soil is yielding a more abundant harvest of unemployment than any previous crop. The "Times" of the 6th January declares that, apart from the floating unemployed in the industry, there is a matter of 150,000 who can be considered as permanently rejected. These conditions are in fact making for the building up of the N.U.W.C.M. committees. But the problem is becoming increasingly acute in regard to the competition between the local lodges of the N.U.W.C.M. in the matter of organising the unemployed. Here and there lodges are entirely made up of unemployed members. The lodge officials are working on the unemployment question. Special contribution rates are in operation to suit the position. Under circumstances of this description, it is no easy matter to persuade the unemployed miner to become an individual member of another organisation in addition to the one that is already, to some extent, catering for him. The payment of an unemployment contribution into two organisations from the meagre amount of Exchange benefit or out-relief is no small consideration.

In other sections also, as boilermakers, printers, engineers, railwaymen, there is this tendency for the unemployed trade unionist to remain within the orbit of his trade union branch. We are not, however, arriving at the conclusions, which have been reached by the opponents of the N.U.W.C.M., namely, that the trade unions can cater, there is no need for a separate organisation, etc. Far from it. Experience has shown that the average trade union branch lacks the machinery and also the interest to take up matters relating to out-relief, Exchange grievances, feeding of school children, prevention of evictions, and so on. Furthermore the organisation of the unemployed in their respective trade union branches means that each little group exists on a separate oasis of its own cut off from all the others. It means too that the mass



of unemployed outside the trade unions are left derelict. Whilst not agreeing, therefore, that the unemployed can be effectively organised in the isolation of the trade union branch, it is nevertheless plain that some special means of securing the participation of the mass of the trade union unemployed in a general unemployed organisation is necessary.

The solution seems to be to abandon the hope of securing any appreciable number of individual members and to concentrate on winning over the unemployed sections of trade union branches as affiliated bodies. To attempt this spells, at the same time, a probable modification in the structure of the local committees and in other parts of the existing N.U.W.C.M. machinery. An adaptation of the financial rules to the new basis of the organisation would also be a conceivable necessity. Thus the local branch would require to be built up on the affiliated sections and the actual committee made representative of these. Individual membership naturally could not be abolished, but representation of the individual membership on the committee would be limited to a fixed number of delegates appointed at a general meeting to function along with the delegates of the affiliated sections. To build up a real mass organisation, embracing the bulk of the army of workless, on an individual basis seems to be a forlorn hope. An attempt to construct such a Movement on the double foundation of an individual and an affiliated membership presents at least a prospect.

### The Question of a Programme

By the cementing of closer bonds with the industrial organisations in the manner described, the way will be paved for a closer collaboration in terms of policy. It is obvious at a glance that the most inimical and malignant condition affecting the unemployed miner and standing directly across the path of his return to industry, is the eight hour day. Similarly, overtime in the engineering and other trades is a scandalous grievance causing mortification to the unemployed members of these trades. The chronic casual and part time nature of the employment of dockers, textile workers and, at present, even railwaymen, is the direct outcome of the absence of a guaranteed week. Here then is a ready-made programme to hand for joint employed and unemployed action:—**The abolition of the eight hour day in the mining industry; reductions of hours in all cases; abolition of overtime; the enforcement everywhere of the guaranteed week.** Such a programme has the merit of elevating the unemployment problem to the industrial plane, to which it rightly belongs.

It is impossible, of course, to leave out of our reckoning the questions of unemployment relief which fall within the scope of the Government's legislative and administrative action. The proposal concerning the reform of the Poor Law, flagrantly reactionary as they are, must be opposed at any cost. But here, too, the

issue is governed by the prospects of joint action. These prospects, it may be said, are being undermined at the very outset. The secretary of the T.U.C. has intimated to the N.U.W.C.M. that the General Council do not consider that Poor Law reform is a matter coming within the terms of reference of the Joint Advisory Council of the two bodies, but adds that the General Council has been taking up the matter with the Labour Party. Presumably the object in view is to confine the campaign on this question within the channels of simple electioneering. Consequently the N.U.W.C.M. and with it anything savouring of real, mass action, is to be conveniently dropped. Yet another proof of the attempt on the part of the gentlemen of the General Council to make the Joint Advisory Council of employed and unemployed a dead letter!

In conjunction with the Minority Movement every effort must be made to compel the General Council to treat the Joint Advisory Council as a reality. Meanwhile, the proposals of Poor Law reform must be made a live issue as between the local unemployed committees, Trades' Councils and Labour parties. Also the Left Wing M.P.'s should be invited to adopt obstructionist tactics of a formidable nature in the House of Commons. Necessarily associated with the attack on out-relief is the onslaught on the unemployed at the Labour Exchanges which is bound to grow more acute due to the chronic insolvency of the unemployment insurance fund. Along similar lines this issue will have to be fought.

### Tactics and Immediate Methods of Struggle

To propose something new and original for the unemployed to do by way of resistance and retaliation against their callous-minded governors would really involve bringing forward something novel and probably spectacular and sensational. Whereas it is the spectacular and the sensational that is least likely to meet with success at the present stage. The capitalist dictatorship, which has so ruthlessly, during the past year, crushed, clubbed and crippled every form of working class organisation, is not likely to stand on ceremony with a handful of demonstrators attempting to approach the House of Commons or endeavouring to create a diversion in the West End. Undoubtedly the well-known forms of struggle must continue to remain in use—the school strike, the rent strike, the anti-eviction blockade, the march on the workhouse, the hunger march and so on. But every effort must be employed, every grain of energy expended, to commit the whole of the organised Labour movement in these and other activities. It is isolation that is the chief danger of the unemployed. Mass pressure, the weapon of the demonstration, must, if necessary, be turned first against the trade union and Labour Party bureaucracy to compel them to initiate class action in the prosecution of the unemployed struggle.



## The Labour Party in the Service of Empire

By "AETHIOPIAN."

"The Labour Party and the Empire," by L. HADEN GUEST. (Labour Publishing Company, 95 pages, paper covers. Price 1s.)  
 "Labour and the Empire—Africa." Preface by J. H. THOMAS, M.P. (T. U.C. and the Labour Party; 27 pages, paper covers. Price 6d.)  
 "British Imperialism in East Africa." (Labour Research Department; 64 pages, paper covers. Price 6d.)

THESE three pamphlets form an interesting commentary on the political relations of Great Britain with Africa, and are a still more instructive exposé of the standpoint of official Labour. How far towards the

Right Labour has travelled is well illustrated by Haden Guest's monograph, which might have been written by any reactionary Tory. On the cover we find the words "Socialism and Imperialism are opposed, yet a Labour Government is faced with the fact of Empire. What is to be its policy?" It is apparently to be a perpetuation of the slave-Empire, and this is to be secured by a species of sophisticated juggle which causes principles diametrically opposed to appear harmoniously and indissolubly compatible. Socialism and Imperialism have come to be considered as one, and we find here all the old Imperialistic platitudes, not only accepted as inevitable, but welcomed as intrinsically desirable.

At the very beginning we find enunciated the principle that one of the functions of the Labour Party is "the development of the Empire as a whole"—a development which is later shown to aim at a supply of cheap labour in the coloured portions of the Empire, an economic exploitation of primitive Africa by capitalist enterprises, and a migration of our own unemployed workers to remoter outposts of the Empire where unemployment already exists, but where the cries of the deluded victims will not reach the ears of a credulous electorate. "They ought to go chiefly to the British Dominions," he adds, "because they become very good customers for our export manufacturing industries." In other words migration is for the benefit of the capitalist bosses.

In the welter of pious platitudes which characterise the first pamphlet, it is difficult to select individual items for criticism, as the author is careful to avoid facts and relies on a medley of "ex-

cathedra" utterances, which are not only unverified, but incapable of verification. He appears, however, to have been told that cannibalism is practised in the Sudan, and repeats this statement "ad nauseam" as though cannibalism were a justification for Imperialistic domination.

"Very few tribes," he writes, "have even a remote conception of any other form of organisation than the tribe." Granted that this were true, why should they seek to emulate Imperialist aggrandisement? If they are content to live a communal life as a tribe, is that a reason for forcing alien institutions on them? But even in his premises he is wrong, as he does not appear to have heard of the Zulu, the Basuto, the Swazi, the Baganda, to mention only a few of the many multi-tribal confederacies.

"The tribes look after their own affairs now, and they are guarded against mere rapacity and plundering." We would not impugn Haden Guest's honesty, but his capacity for assimilating indubitable falsehoods is astounding. The one thing which the tribes are not allowed to do is to manage their own affairs. Two methods of government are adopted—the direct rule of the British official, and indirect rule through chiefs who are appointed by British officials and either carry out their instructions or are deposed. In both cases the result is the same, and the tribe does not control its own destiny.

Has Haden Guest never heard of punitive expeditions? And if so, why does he talk of "safeguards" against rapacity and plundering, when every such expedition—and they are of frequent occurrence—is primarily concerned with loot; and where well-armed soldiers shoot down at long range hundreds of covering natives unarmed for resistance, their vitality and manhood already sapped by economic exploitation and their organisation deliberately disintegrated to such a point that coherent resistance is impossible?

### Doctrine of "Trusteeship."

In his chapter on "Labour in Africa," Haden Guest exhibits to the fullest his capacity for confused thought and illogicality. He shows clearly enough how the African has in the past been despoiled, exploited and enslaved; he assumes on no evidence, in fact against all the evidence, that his condition to-day has improved; and he piously expects that a Socio-Imperialistic government will in the future be able to continue a policy of exploitation tempered by a not-too-altruistic benevolence. "The doctrine of trusteeship" (blessed word) "upon which the government of native races is now admittedly based, is essentially a Socialist doctrine." "In a word the West African policy pays the nation." "This (the economic development of Africa) will result in increased prosperity for the industrial areas of Great Britain, because of the increased demand for goods which it will create."



These three quotations give the core of Labour policy: trusteeship is accepted, and economic development is accepted—both incompatible segments of a vicious circle. And the coping-stone of the policy, of this altruistic policy of trusteeship, is material profit!

Hear also what comfortable words the author recently spoke in the House. "I believe that it is possible to draw up a plan which will gradually incorporate native peoples into the type of civilisation in which we ourselves live." We, who have tried our civilisation and found it wanting, we whose hope it is to rid ourselves of its intolerable incubus, we are nevertheless such honourable trustees that we would draw Africa into the toils which have enmeshed and degraded us!

"The British Administration," we are told, "has often dropped its capitalist bias in the interests of good government." This may be so, but we are given no evidence of it. We are only referred to "the ruthlessness of the exploitation of native labour in the past,"—and we may add, in the present: "the tendency to regard coloured labour as merely so much wealth-producing machinery": "the evil conditions of the recruiting and employment of native labour for mine work in South Africa, and the special restrictive legislation for natives in Kenya".

We are doubtless wrong in assuming that all this indicates a capitalist bias, just as we are no doubt wrong in questioning the unqualified statement that "a considerable area of East Africa is suitable for white colonisation." It is, and as Ormsby-Gore so felicitously phrased it: "It so happens that the highlands of East Africa are sparsely inhabited by Africans, and thus available for white settlement."

It certainly so happens, as the native occupiers of the highlands have incontinently been removed from a country so desirable to the concupiscent eyes of capital and removed, despite treaties and guarantees, not once nor twice, but certainly removed in the furtherance of our "sacred trusteeship." Doubtless also, it is in the interests of good government that the Suk of Kenya can now only herd one-quarter of the stock which they formerly owned, and that only by trespassing on their neighbours' lands.

That Haden Guest is not entirely blind, we see when he writes:

"In East Africa generally the interests of negro and white are in competition, and a whole series of difficulties, and in some cases grave injustices to the natives, have arisen, while the country is less prosperous than West Africa. It should not be thought, however, that there is anything exceptional about the conditions in East Africa. They are, on the contrary, the likely and probable results of the penetration of Africa by white men."

Given this likely and probable injustice, given the fact that where, as in West Africa, African conditions are more respected, there the natives are more prosperous, the solution would appear to be immediately obvious, but no: Haden Guest and the Labour Party are wedded to the worn-out shibboleths of Tory capitalism,

and we may expect nothing from them but a deadly "trusteeship" and a benevolence as lethal as it is hypocritical.

### Capitalism for Africans

The second pamphlet need not detain us long. While shorter, it is in effect on the same lines as "The Labour Party and the Empire," with a more specific reference to Africa. It envisages no less a Socialist Empire and the economic exploitation of Africa under the guise of a benevolent altruism. We know what to expect from Thomas, and his short Preface prepares us for what follows. In it he sums up the Labour policy for Africa in three concise heads, which are briefly: (1) Security of tenure in communal land; (2) Freedom of the worker and the abolition of compulsory labour or slavery; (3) Education of the native "to take his place, both economically and politically, as a free man in the conditions which Western civilisation has imposed upon Africa."

With the first two provisos we must all agree, but the third! Well, one can only argue where there is a common basis for argument. Here there is none. If Western civilisation has been imposed upon Africa, why continue an imposition which inevitably invalidates the first and second premises? Under Western civilisation, as we know it to-day, communal tenure of land never remains long a political possibility, and economic pressure inevitably creates a proletariat of wage-slaves the beginning of which can already be seen in Africa to-day.

While the intolerable injustice which has scourged Africa during the last twenty years is apparently appreciated, the same illogicality as characterises Haden Guest permeates this pamphlet. All the constructive policy which is here advocated must inevitably perpetuate the savage exploitation which Imperialism and capitalism have conspired to initiate.

The Labour policy, we read "does not seek to exclude European enterprise and capital, but to confine them within the limits where they can be usefully exercised without infringing the liberties or arresting the progress of the native peoples." Fatal amelioration! Can the Labour Party tell us how capital, once admitted, can be confined, and what are the limits within which it can function? For our part we believe that any introduction of the capitalist system must react unfavourably on native liberties and native institutions.

Again we are told: "Unless the rights of native communities are adequately safeguarded, it may lead to the establishment of a system of individual native landlordism, which is no less bad than white landlordism. The beginnings of such a system are visible in the Gold Coast and Uganda." The Labour Party appears to be entirely ignorant of African institutions, under which security of tenure is invariably guaranteed to each and every member of the



community. It is only under British protection, which is ever more ready to protect the strong and powerful in their usurpations than the weak in their travail, that native landlordism can develop.

For such an idea is foreign to indigenous constitutions, and is a direct result of contact with white domination. In Uganda, for instance, not only is the growth of native landlordism due to the protection afforded to powerful and unconstitutional chiefs, but it has been largely facilitated by an official report on Bantu Land Tenure, which was drawn up by a distinguished judge, based on a complete misunderstanding of the local system and invalidated by European pre-conceptions of property.

With all that is written on the policy of appropriating native land to European settlement, and on the effect of confining the native to reserves, and on the economic and other forms of pressure which are used to force the native to become a wage-slave, we cordially agree, and to the evil results which are enumerated on page sixteen, we should add, that the long absences of the adult males from the reserves have of necessity led to a loosening of the old moral codes, and to the spread of venereal disease.

The fourth tenet of Labour policy in regard to land reads: "Every native family should be assured of sufficient land for its support, with security of tenure." Does this mean that the tribal systems of land tenure are to be scrapped, and that for communal an individual tenure is to be substituted? This cuts right at the foundations of native society, and must lead to complete tribal disintegration. Moreover, be it noted, that no provision is apparently made for the future. Every family is to be assured of sufficient land; the rest will be alienated, and in fifty or a hundred years the native areas will be so congested that their land will not suffice even for a bare living, and they will, as in South Africa, be forced to buy back from Europeans their old tribal lands, which were expropriated without payment or compensation.

### Compulsory Labour

When it is stated that the taxation of natives in Kenya is too high while that of Europeans is too light, this is a simple truth; it should, however, have been added that an attempt was made by the government to introduce Income Tax for Europeans, but when after a year's abortive attempt to collect it, the government saw that the European community was determined not to pay, the tax was incontinently dropped. Contrast this with the treatment of the Kikuyu, who in 1922 protested against excessive taxation. There was no sympathy shown here, and in the riot which followed about thirty natives were killed and their leader, Harry Thinku, was deported. It is an instructive contrast.

In a footnote on page 19, we read that "In primitive communities certain work like clearing jungle paths has to be done by each village, and the community has to have the power to see that no one shirks his share." Apart from the fact that this theory

does not hold with all primitive communities, although it has now been generally applied in an arbitrary way, the demands for what is euphemistically called "communal labour" have become so onerous that the present practice is quite unrelated to any primitive theory. Roads fit for motor traffic are made by this compulsory labour, which, being a communal duty, is unpaid: rivers are bridged, great swamps are embanked, rest-houses are built and maintained by the various communities. This has no point of contact with legitimate communal duties, and is an ever-increasing burden which is deeply resented and only accepted under coercion.

The concluding five pages on Government and Education are frankly nonsense. A governmental and educational system based on our own is outlined for peoples who can only function if their indigenous political systems are left untouched. Representation on Legislative Councils does not interest them, and its introduction would at once strike a fatal blow to their own organisations, and would serve to speed up the process of disintegration which has already started to transform free communities into individual wage-slaves. The system of education which is suggested can only have the same result. Thus we see the Labour Party joining capitalism in a policy of exploitation so thinly veiled as to be transparent to the least discerning eye.

### Imperialism in East Africa

Of a different calibre is "British Imperialism in East Africa," prepared by the Labour Research Department. This offers no nostrum of amelioration, but gives a restrained and dispassionate statement of the present position. It shows unmistakably and with a sufficiency of illustration how the African has been, and is being exploited by capital, and how the simple peasant is being rapidly converted by economic and political pressure into a wage-slave, deprived of his traditional rights, land and liberty. It is an exceedingly interesting and useful pamphlet, well documented and presented with a scrupulous honesty.

It is the greater pity therefore, that the map is hopelessly inadequate. Not only is the distribution of agricultural products very incompletely shown, but important errors have been allowed to creep in: wheat, for instance, does not grow in Uganda in the area indicated, and never could grow there. On page 4 the meaning of the phrase "with the exception of one district in Uganda" is obscure and liable to misinterpretation. It is doubtless intended to contrast the whole of Uganda with other portions of East Africa, but the word "district" signifies an administrative entity within the Protectorate, and should not be used loosely in this context. The whole of Uganda, though nominally Crown Land, is open to African occupation and usufruct. On the same page it is stated that "the population in nearly all parts of Africa is declining." This is too sweeping a generalisation, and if allowed



to pass unchallenged would be used by the expropriators of tribal land as an argument for their policy. Actually, during the last few years, the population of certain Bantu tribes like the Baganda and Banyoro has been falling owing to a variety of causes including syphilis, which was probably first introduced by Arab slave traders and not by Europeans, as suggested on page 3 (though doubtless Europeans have since contributed to its spread), but this disease has now been checked, though the census figures are so unreliable that precision is impossible. Among the Nilotic tribes there has always been a steady increase, but wherever a policy of reserves is in force we may there anticipate a decrease in the birth-rate chiefly for psychological reasons, and the only cure for this is to abstain from hemming tribes into artificial reserves.

A minor point should be noticed on page 15: the kingdom of Buganda is not "the basis of the native production of cotton." The industry was developed in the Eastern Province primarily by non-Bantu Africans and was only lately adopted by the Baganda under government advice.

That more than half the granaries in Uganda were owned by Indians was once true, but during the last two years a great change has taken place and Japanese capital is gradually replacing Indian holdings, either wholly and openly, or by securing a controlling financial interest in companies which were formerly purely Indian. This is a new factor which will require close attention in the coming years and may lead to serious complications.

With these provisos we can heartily commend this booklet to any who care to understand what Imperialism means to the African. It is a strong indictment, but just, and it contains nothing which cannot be readily verified. It is lucidly and dispassionately written, and is a useful and stimulating corrective to the two pamphlets which head our list.



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